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Lucia A Keegan 09/18/2006 10:22:26 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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SUBJECT: FRENCH COMMEMORATIONS OF 9/11 5TH ANNIVERSARY

REF: STATE 145167

SUMMARY

11. On the occasion of the 5th anniversary of September 11th, Post engaged a number of French institutions and government representatives to help commemorate this significant date. Below is a listing of the events in Paris and the provinces. Ceremonies included: a religious service at the American Cathedral; a military tribute at the American cemetery of Suresnes; a 9/11 documentary world premiere at the Ambassador's residence; a tour of New York photography exhibit hosted by the IVLP alumni group; a 9/11 website launching; ceremonies at the Luxembourg gardens and Suresnes American cemetery; and a tri-mission town hall meeting. End Summary.

DOCUMENTARY SCREENING AT THE RESIDENCE

12. On August 31 Ambassador and the CEO of France Televisions, Patrick de Carolis co-hosted the French premiere screening of the France 2-Discovery Channel-BBC-RTL docudrama "September 11 Inside the Twin Towers." Key Embassy contacts and French as well as Paris-based foreign media gathered at the Ambassador's residence to view the film, which interspersed testimony from those who escaped the towers, victims' families and other witnesses, with recreation of the events transpiring within the towers. Ambassador and de Carolis both made remarks focusing on the upcoming fifth anniversary of 9/11, and reflecting on the tragedy and its consequences. Popular national daily Le Parisien covered the screening and the Ambassador's participation in a poignant article.

IVLP ALUMNI COMMEMORATION

13. On September 8, in collaboration with the Cercle Jefferson (the French IVLP alumni association) the Embassy organized a special tour of the photo exhibit "Landmarks of New York." The exhibit, which celebrates the architectural heritage of New York, is displayed at the Mona Bismarck Foundation. The Cercle Jefferson was formed just after the tragic events of 9/11 by a group of energetic French professionals who are former participants of the Department's IVLP, and who wanted to make a significant gesture of friendship towards the United States and its people. During his remarks to an audience of approximately 30 guests, representing a broad sector of French national and local government representatives, private enterprise and American association presidents, PAO James L. Bullock stressed our appreciation of the motivation behind the Cercle's creation. He also underscored the importance of Franco-American cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The Cercle's secretary general, Pascal Dupeyrat flew to the United States the next day to personally present to the American people the French IV alumni's sincere and heartfelt expressions of friendship on the occasion of the 9/11 commemorations in New York.

AMERICAN CATHEDRAL SERVICE

14. At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the American Cathedral held a special 'liturgy of remembrance and peace' on Sunday, September 10th. The very reverend Zachary W. M. Fleetwood, Dean of the Cathedral, gave the homily, which focused on the tragedy and loss of 9/11 and the need to promote peace and reconciliation. In tribute to the 9/11 observance, OECD Ambassador Connie Morella was one of the lecturers. Ambassador Stapleton's absence due to conflicting schedules, and his support for the cathedral program, were noted in the service bulletin. Economic Minister Counselor represented the Embassy at this service, and a number of Embassy staff and American community families were also in attendance.

SURESNNES CEMETERY CEREMONY

15. On September 10th, Ambassador attended a special military ceremony organized by the city of Suresnes and the 40/8 society of France. The ceremony was held at the American cemetery of Suresnes, where thousands of American soldiers are buried. Ambassador's remarks in memory of the victims of 9/11 were a key aspect of a ceremony that also included a roll call of the list of passengers and crew on board flight 93, the French and U.S. national anthems, and words by the mayor of Suresnes, Christian Dupuy and a special prayer by the American Cathedral Dean. Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion representatives, as well as members of the public were present at this moving ceremony.

TOWN HALL MEETING

16. The three U.S. Missions in France held a town hall event in the Chancery Atrium on Monday, September 11 at opening of business. With USOECD Ambassador Morella and USUNESCO Charge Koss in attendance, Ambassador Stapleton delivered remarks reflecting on September 11, 2001 and honoring those who lost their lives and those who lost them in order to save others. A local staff member delivered an ecumenical prayer she had written specifically for the event. The large assembly arrived and departed in silence, clearly moved by the meaningful remembrance service.

9/11 CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE

17. The morning of September 11, Ambassador and Pierre-Christian Taittinger, mayor of the 16th arrondissement, laid a wreath at the foot of the tree planted at the Place des Etats Unis, on the occasion of the first anniversary of 9/11. A minute of silence was observed by all in attendance, including local elected officials, diplomatic representatives, and press.

9/11 WEBSITE LAUNCHING CEREMONY

¶8. Following the wreath laying ceremony at the Place des Etats Unis, Ambassador, Mayor Taittinger and Embassy delegation headed for the town hall, where a press conference was held to launch a special website dedicated to the victims of 9/11. The audience at this event also included representatives of Franco-American institutions and French youth. The website, www.mardillseptembre.com, born from an initiative by three French NATO tour alumni, is bilingual and permits citizens from around the world to freely post their testimony on where they were on September 11th, 2001. The apolitical nature of the website is an attempt to pay homage to the victims of 9/11, reach out to their families, and celebrate the solidarity and friendship between the American and French people. Ambassador Stapleton, French Ambassador to the U.S. Levitte and former Foreign Affairs minister Michel Barnier, among others, have already provided video testimonials for the website.

FRENCH SENAT WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY

¶9. In a public ceremony attended by hundreds of French parliamentarians, members of the diplomatic community, and representatives of Franco-American organizations as well as the media, the president of the French Senat, Mr. Christian Poncelet, and Charge paid tribute to the memory of the victims of 9/11, pledging to continue the fight against terror. The solemn ceremony, covered by French and international print and electronic media, included a U.S. Marines color guard, numerous Garde Republicaine troops, as well as its 85-member military band. After the national anthems and a minute of silence, Senat President Poncelet and Charge laid wreaths by the "American tree" planted in January 2002 in memory of the victims of 9/11. The tree is situated next to a replica of the statue of liberty in the famous Luxembourg gardens adjoining the French senate.

AROUND FRANCE: MARSEILLE

¶10. Marseille CG Participated in two commemoration ceremonies in Cannes and Antibes, both organized by the local municipalities. Mayor Brochand of Cannes, who was in New York City on 9/11, and lost colleagues in the twin towers, gave an emotional speech that focused on the solidarity of the American people in the face of the terrible losses they suffered that day. The ceremony also honored the victims of terrorism in the UK, Spain, Russia and Israel. The wreath laying ceremony included the CG and American college students in Cannes for an exchange program.

DOUAI (LILLE DISTRICT)

¶11. On September 11 at 15:46 local time, Lille Consul inaugurated IIP papershow "Headlines of History: September 11, 2001" at the Douai City Hall. Mayor Jacques Vernier and IV06 alumnus and member of Parliament, Sebastien Huyghe, were in attendance. The posters showcase fifty newspaper front pages from all over the world dated September 12, 2001. They will be displayed at Douai City Hall until September 17. Schools of Douai will be invited to tour this temporary exhibit. Local press La Voix du Nord and L'Observateur du Douaisis covered the event. Then the papershow will be donated to Lille Journalism School (Ecole Superieure de Journalisme de Lille, ESJ).

METZ (STRASBOURG DISTRICT)

¶12. A minute of silence was observed on September 11, just prior to presentations by the IO at Metz City Hall and the Strasbourg Synagogue, on the topic of "September 11, five years later." A consular officer on TDY in Strasbourg also appeared on France 3

regional TV at noon and in the evening of 09/11. PA Strasbourg also assisted France Bleu Alsace radio station in locating Alsatians contacts in New York for live broadcasts on 09/11.

LYON DISTRICT

¶13. Consul and Senator-Mayor of Saint-Etienne inaugurated "Headlines of History" exhibit on September 5 and at Lafayette's childhood chateau in Auvergne on September 11. On September 11 Consul also visited Lyon fire station, which had extended an invitation as a way to show solidarity with the FDNY.

MEDIA REPORTS

¶14. Throughout France, print and television media covered 9/11 anniversary commemorations in the U.S., and included interviews with mission officials. Popular le Parisien begins its 9/11 commemoration series with a headline reading: "The tragedy that changed the world." Inside, Ambassador Stapleton's interview carries the title: "The terrorists have not given up," a quote taken from the interview. Ambassador explained he was Ambassador in Prague at the time of the attacks and recalled his first actions to protect the American community. That same morning, on FR2, the media review, which included the special issue by Le Parisien, prominently showed the interview page and the Ambassador's photo. On the evening of 9/11, Charge gave televised interviews to LCI and BFM.

¶15. Marseille CG gave an interview to Midi Libre for its September 11 special report; a live morning news interview to Radio Juive Marseille; an evening news interview for local TV station "La Chaîne Marseillaise" (LCM); an interview to daily "Nice Matin" in partnership with the Mayor of Antibes, Jean Leonetti (UMP). CG stressed the progress that had been made in the struggle against terrorism, and noted the need to move forward together as much remained to be done.

¶16. Bordeaux Local daily Sud-Ouest Sunday (10th) and Monday (11th) had lead front page stories and picture focusing on events of 9/11. Sunday's headline was "New York N'Oublie Pas" with a photo of the wreckage of the twin towers, and main editorial and four internal pages devoted to 9/11 and terrorism. Monday's headline was "Cinq Ans Apres le 11 Septembre" and featured a photo of the President and Mrs. Bush yesterday at the ground zero ceremony with the main editorial and three internal pages devoted to 9/11 and the current situation of Al Qaida. The editorials are at times quite critical of U.S. actions since the attacks, but express considerable sympathy and concern for what occurred on 9/11.

¶17. Rennes On September 11th, Consul gave an interview to regional TV channel France 3 Ouest, whose journalist focused on how, five years after the tragedy, Americans dealt with it on a daily basis and how it affected security at the Renees office. Consul explained that 9/11 was a day to remember but that American facilities had been targeted in the past, lessons were learnt that they were people out there that felt misunderstood and frustrated with the US but changing the way we live our lives would mean the terrorists had won. Consul reinforced the fact that we work closely with French authorities, that they are doing a great job and that we felt safe in Brittany.

¶18. Lyon's Consul gave interviews on the subject beginning September 5 (radio Saint-Etienne), September 8 (radio Lyon, France 3 television Rhone-Alpes), September 11 (France 3 television Auvergne).

MESSAGES OF SUPPORT

¶19. The mission has also received many messages of support and friendship from the public and embassy contacts including USG exchange alumni, one of whom wrote: "Five years after these abject acts of horror, the world-wide pain and compassion, and the world-wide communion with the American people remain intact."

